

JAMES H. DOUGLAS
GOVERNOR



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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**FREEMAN FOUNDATION FUNDS THIRD YEAR OF INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR
VERMONT PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Stowe, VT -- The Freeman family, on behalf of the Freeman Foundation, today announced at a news conference with Governor James H. Douglas and State Librarian Sybil Brigham McShane, a grant of \$2 million to the Department of Libraries' Vermont Public Library Foundation incentive grant program for public libraries. This grant represents the third and final year of the program which has already awarded over \$10 million to local public libraries in support of the state library agency's efforts to improve library effectiveness and community outreach throughout the state.

During the previous two years of the program more than 160 libraries have used/are using the funding for a variety of projects including building additions and renovations, ADA accessibility improvements, infrastructure, furnishing, fixture and equipment upgrades, automation/computerization of card catalogs and circulation, public access computers, internet access and computer training for the public, collection improvements—new books, books-on-tape/CD, videos/DVDs and large print books, additional staff and increased library hours, staff education, library programs for all ages, outreach services to daycares, nursing homes and homebound, bookmobile services, publicity/publications. Grant projects are designed by the individual library and based on local needs and goals for library services.

In Year 3, public libraries may apply for funds up to 12.5% of total operating income (from local, state, and federal sources) with a minimum grant of \$1,000 and a maximum of \$50,000. Libraries that received an increase in local tax support between November 1999 and November 2002 will be awarded a "bonus" (2.5% with a maximum grant of \$62,500). 190 libraries, defined as "public libraries" under Vermont law, are eligible.

Governor Douglas said that in challenging economic times funding offered by the Freeman Foundation makes it possible for Vermont's libraries to continue their important work. "Libraries are more vital to our communities than ever before," Governor Douglas said. "It's gratifying to see so many moving forward with innovative and inclusive projects that continue to open doors for our residents, and the Freeman Foundation helps make much of this possible."

The incentive grant program is administered by the Department of Libraries, in conjunction with its Vermont Public Library Foundation (VPLF), and the Freeman Foundation.

"This is an exciting time to be a librarian in Vermont," said State Librarian McShane. "The difference the Freeman Foundation funding has made to our libraries has been immediate and the results are visible every day."

Joining Governor Douglas and State Librarian McShane at the press conference were Mr. and Mrs. Houghton Freeman, and Don Post of the Freeman Foundation. A number of librarians from around the state also attended the announcement.

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